

Message Text

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USNMR SHAPE

USDEL MC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 977

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR GR US

SUBJECT: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS - STATUS OF FORCES (SOFA)

REF: A. STATE 23900; B. ATHENS 892

SUMMARY: US ACCEPTANCE OF EXCHANGE RATE COMPROMISE PROPOSED BY GREEKS AND INABILITY TO ACCEPT POV TAX FORMULA WAS COMMUNICATED TO GREEKS IN LATEST SOFA SUBGROUP SESSION. GREEK PROPOSAL TO INCORPORATE SUBSTANCE OF AGREED MINUTES INTO RELEVANT ARTICLES OF DRAFT SOFA WAS ACCEPTED AND DRAFT SOFA REVISED ACCORDINGLY. BOTH SIDES AGREED TO FURTHER CONSIDER POV TAX ISSUE. WASHINGTON AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT POSSIBLE COMPROMISE REQUESTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. GREEK SIDE AGAIN PRESSED FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SOFA. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE SOFA SUBGROUP AGAIN MET IN EXTENDED SESSION ON

31 JANUARY. PURSUANT TO INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED REF A, US SIDE COMMUNICATED US ACCEPTANCE OF GREEK COMPROMISE PROPOSAL ON EXCHANGE RATE (PARA 3, REF B) AND REJECTED PROPOSED POV TAX FORMULATION (PARA 2, REF B). BOTH SIDES REITERATED POSITIONS PREVIOUSLY AND EXHAUSTIVELY ARGUED, AND US SIDE AGAIN PROPOSED \$100 LIMITATION ON TOTAL POV TAX. GREEK SIDE ADVISED THAT PREVIOUS COMPROMISE OFFER WAS ENDORSED AT MINISTERIAL MEETING AND OPINED THAT FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF ISSUE WOULD REQUIRE ESCALATION TO PRIME MINISTER FOR RESOLUTION. NOTWITHSTANDING RATIONALE OF PARA 1, REF A, GREEK SIDE WAS NOT SANGUINE THAT US LIMIT OF \$100 WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE, BUT HINTED THAT SOME FURTHER COMPROMISE MIGHT BE POSSIBLE IF SUBJECT ESCALATED TO PRIME MINISTERIAL LEVEL. REQUEST WASHINGTON AUTHORITY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO ACCEPT ANY NEW GREEK POV TAX REFORMULATION WHICH DOES NOT EXCEED \$25 ONE-TIME REGISTRATION AND LICENSING FEE, WITH \$100 ANNUAL ROAD USE TAX FOR AUTOMOBILES AND \$50 ROAD USE TAX FOR MOTORCYCLES.

2. GREEK SIDE IN A COMPLETE REVERSAL OF THEIR PREVIOUS POSITION, PROPOSED THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE AGREED MINUTES BE INCORPORATED INTO THE RELEVANT ARTICLE OF THE DRAFT SOFA. HOWEVER, THE EXTENSION TO DIPLOMATIC MISSION (INCLUDING JUSMAGG) PERSONNEL OF COMMISSARY/PX, POST OFFICE AND MILITARY BANKING PRIVILEGES WOULD BE COVERED IN A SEPARATE EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES. (AS WASHINGTON WILL RECALL, AGREED MINUTE VEHICLE WAS INITIALLY INSTITUTED AT GREEK REQUEST.) US SIDE ACCEPTED THIS PROPOSAL AND ENGAGED IN JOINT EFFORT TO REVISE THE DRAFT SOFA ACCORDINGLY. THE COMPLETE TEXT OF THE REVISED DRAFT SOFA, AGREED AD REFERENDUM EXCEPT FOR AMOUNT OF POV TAX, FOLLOWS IN SEPTTEL.

3. GREEK SIDE AGAIN PRESSED FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SOFA AND EXPRESSED INTEREST IN US SUGGESTION THAT AN EXCHANGE OF NOTES TO ACCOMPLISH THAT PURPOSE AD INTERIM MIGHT BE PROPOSED TO THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. THE TWO SIDES DISCUSSED POSSIBLE CONTENT OF SUCH AN EXCHANGE. A DRAFT IS NOW UNDER PREPARATION AND WILL BE PROVIDED IN ANOTHER CONFIDENTIAL

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SEPTTEL FOR WASHINGTON CONSIDERATION.
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